

On Movie Cliches*

Joe Dutton

Cecil C. de Cliche takes the stand.

- Q. You are a motion picture director, Mr. de Cliche?
- A. Yes, I have directed many of the outstanding flickers from Hollywood.
- Q. I see. What type of motion picture is your favorite, Mr. de Cliche?
- A. I find epics of the old West very thrilling. But, of course, international intrigues, tuneful muisicals, powerful melodramas, and swashbuckling tales of the sea also rank high with me.
- Q. What do you consider necessary elements of a good motion picture?
- A. A good movie must have a star-studded cast.
- Q. What is a star-studded cast, Mr. de Cliche?
- A. That is a cast with a versatile young actress and an adept actor playing the leading roles. Two exciting discoveries or newcomers will help improve the appeal of the film.
- Q. Mr. de Cliche, can you tell us any other indispensable elements of a good movie?
- A. Yes, a well-woven plot is essential. The plot can be made even better if it is well-seasoned with spine-tingling suspense, hilarious comedy, psychological moments, and torrid love scenes.
- Q. What reactions does a good film provoke in the public?
- A. A good movie will win the critics' acclaim and will break all previous box-office records. If it is of Academy Award calibre, the film may even win the coveted Oscar.
- Q. But how does the ordinary person in an audience react?
- A. If he is seeing a sparkling comedy, the average movie-goer will be rolling in the aisles. If it is a blood-curdling horror film, he surely will be sitting on the edge of his seat. If it is a tear-jerker, the ladies will bring an extra handkerchief and will be urged not to tell their friends how the movie ends.
- Q. How does Hollywood advertise the motion pictures, Mr. de Cliche?
- A. First, we send advance advertisements to cities and towns all over the United States. These posters tell the public that the particular movie is the best thing to come to the screen in years. In smaller print, the posters announce that the film is a million dollar production in lavish technicolor. Then we have a world premiere and personal appearance tours. That usually does the trick.

- Q. I see. Now, Mr. de Cliche, will you give your opinion of the motion picture industry as a whole?
- A. The motion picture industry is a great American institution. In filmdom, both talent and beauty are common. An actor or actress may rise to fame and see his name in lights, while others, equally talented, may live and die in obscurity. It is another of the tragedies of human endeavor.

*Apologies to Frank Sullivan, author of "The Cliche Expert."

